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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify the literacy needs of adults with disabilities and to examine the extent to which these needs are being met by community-based adult basic literacy programs in the metropolitan Toronto, Ontario, Canada area. Data for the study were gathered through questionnaires used to interview 15 potential adult learners with disabilities and 15 community-based literacy programs in the Toronto area and through interviews with a number of government officials responsible for literacy services for persons with disabilities and through a review of documentation. Issues identified include the following: architectural accessibility, communication-assisting devices, attendant care, outreach needs, and the myths attributed to the population of people with disabilities. One major concern is the failure to provide the population with disabilities with information about accessible literacy programs. The study concluded that greater outreach efforts to persons with disabilities need to be made by literacy programs, but recognized that limited funding often makes such efforts difficult. (Contains the survey questionnaire and 11 references.) (KC)

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THE ACCESSIBILITY OF LITERACY UPGRADING IN THE COMMUNITY FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

A study of the needs which surround literacy upgrading for adults with disabilities and the extent to which these needs are being addressed by the programs responsible for the delivery of adult basic literacy tutoring in the community.

Winter, 1988

Researched and Written by

Jeffrey D. Freedman

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Foreward

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) Inc. is organized by and for people with disabilities. We provide peer support, social advocacy and information and referral services. In regard to the latter, we provide our consumers with information concerning services and programs necessary for integrated community living such as accessible transportation services, attendant care services or any needed service or program.

We are continually extending the scope of our information network. In this report we examine the literacy needs of people with disabilities (i.e., physical disabilities, mental handicaps and sensory impairments) as well as determine the potential within some existing literacy programs to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. Representatives from 15 different literacy programs in the Metro Toronto area and 15 people with disabilities who have literacy needs have been interviewed.

The findings of this study will be used by CILT as a guide to identify literacy programs in terms of their potential for meeting the needs of people with disabilities. A consumer with a disability who also has literacy needs will then be able to contact CILT and receive help in the process of finding a suitable program. The findings will also be forwarded to organizations and programs which are responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring to the community so that they may benefit from an understanding of the literacy needs as expressed by the informants.

The two questionnaires employed in this study (one for the Literacy Programs and the other for potential learners) are included in the appendix. We welcome any feedback in regard to the strengths and limitations of these questionnaires. Furthermore, we would greatly appreciate any information about similar studies or documents.

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Acknowledgements

There are many people who have helped throughout the course of this investigation. It is not possible to record the names of the numerous consumers, government officials, community leaders and literacy practitioners who have supported me in this research. Many people have asked for anonymity due to the "off the record" nature of these interviews. There are, however, three people who deserve special recognition.

Victor Gascon, who is now working with MSD, has assisted me with this research since day one. Through his experience as a literacy coordinator and his involvement with the disabled population, both as a concerned professional and as a father of a son with a disability, Victor has contributed a keen sense of understanding and insight.

Tracy Odell, who also works with the Ministry of Skills Development (MSD), is a brilliant individual who is a certified teacher, has experience of working as a literacy practitioner and is pioneering the way towards unconditional accessibility of literacy programs for all citizens. Tracy, who has a disability which requires her to use a wheelchair, has experienced, first hand, the many barriers to community integration and participation faced by the disabled population. Her experience and insight into the issues which surround literacy upgrading for adults with disabilities has been instrumental in the direction of this investigation.

This research is primarily the brainchild of Sandra Carpenter. Sandy is the executive coordinator for CILT who has been, for many years, fighting tooth and nail for equitable status for people with disabilities. Sandy, who also has a disability which requires her to use a wheelchair, has been most influential in helping me appreciate the Independent Living philosophy as an approach to this investigation. Without her help and devotion, this report would not have been possible.

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Abbreviations

ABL	Adult Basic Literacy
BFDC	Barrier Free Design Centre
BOOST	Blind Organization of Ontario with Self-Help Tactics
CAD	Communication Assisting Device
CILT	Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
CNIB	Canadian National Institute for the Blind
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
DADA	Designing Aids for Disabled Adults
DAP	Disability Awareness Program
ESL	English as a Second Language
MH	Ministry of Health
MSD	Ministry of Skills Development
MTML	Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy
OCL	Ontario Community Literacy Grants Program
ODP	Office for Disabled Persons
PASSING	Program Analysis of Services System Implementation of Normalization Goals
PUSH	Persons United for Self-Help
SCIL	Student Centred Individualized Learning
SPF	Special Projects Fund
TVO	Television Ontario
VRS	Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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Definitions

For the purpose of clarity, the definitions and usage of the terms, "accessible" and "disabled", in context of the sope of this report, are presented.

Accessible:
a state in which a building, program or service is unconditionally open and available to all citizens. Requirements for this state include: acceptance of all peoples regardless of race, creed, color or disability, architectural designs amenable to people who use wheelchairs and/or people with sensory impairements, knowledge of and access to assisting devices which support the needs of consumers and a willingness to provide personal support to individuals.

Disabled:
a term made in reference to the limitation of function of a specific organ or body system. This is not in reference to a person. A person may have a disability but a disability can not have a person.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The mandate of this report is twofold. It is to identify the literacy needs of adults with disabilities and to examine the extent to which these needs are being met by community based adult basic literacy programs in the Metro Toronto area (including: Toronto, North York, York, Willowdale and Scarborough). This report makes recommendations and offers strategies for a more inclusive and effective framework for the availability of literacy tutoring.

This study is intended to be an overview of the many issues involved in the delivery of literacy tutoring to adults with disabilities, rather than a detailed examination of any particular program, project or issue.

Two key areas of focus in this report are accessibility and literacy outreach and the issues identified in this large context include: architecture, communication assisting devices, attendant care and most importantly, a look at the myths attributed to the disabled population.

One major concern is the degree to which the disabled population is being provided with information about available literacy programs. This raises issues which include: literacy outreach within the institutions, outreach to adults with disabilities living in the community and the availability of directories which identify accessible literacy programs.

In order to make recommendations, it is necessary to be made aware of the existing programs in which mandates include literacy issues. Which ministries and community based programs assist people with disabilities who have literacy needs? How are they addressing the literacy needs of adults with disabilities? What are their strengths and limitations? What is the potential for community-based literacy programs to offer an integrated setting to adults with disabilities? The most significant information directing the recommendations comes from the needs and concerns expressed by adults with disabilities who have literacy needs.

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1.2. Background

In recent years, there has been a strong drive to tackle the world-wide problem of illiteracy. In Toronto, there are many government and community-based organizations which aim to eliminate illiteracy. Included in this long list are: Ministry of Skills Development (MSD), Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML), Frontier College and many literacy programs run by the boards of education and community programs The motives for this drive lie in the desire to empower disadvantaged individuals with the necessary means to facilitate community integration and participation, independence, confidence and self-fulfillment. Thomas (1983) has included in her report on adult illiteracy in Canada the Declaration of Persepolis (Sept. 1975); a description of literacy which reflects these goals.

> Literacy is not just the process of learning skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development. Thus conceived, literacy creates the conditions for the acquisition of a critical consciousness of the contradictions of society in which man lives and of its aims; it also stimulates initiative and his participation in his creation of projects of capable of acting upon the world, transforming it, and of defining the aims of an authentic human development. It should open the way to a mastery of techniques and human relations. (p. 16).

These same goals are shared with the movement towards dissolving barriers which handicap people with disabilities. This movement includes government and non-government groups like: Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), Ministry of Health (MH), The Office for Disabled Persons (ODP), Designing Aids for Disabled Adults (DADA), and the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT).

Many of these organizations have been directly and indirectly affected by the independent living (I.L.) philosophy:

> The I.L. concept at its heart has to do with self-determination and liberation for the individual within his society through collective self-determination and self-help by

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> disabled people thereby (achieving) some power over their social environment (Derkson, 1986, p.29).

Although similar objectives and goals shared by the literacy movement and the I.L. movement, neither, with the exception of a few groups, (MSD, DADA, Frontier College and a handful of literacy programs), has yet taken any steps to examine the other's issues.

According to the Report on the Canadian Health and Disability Survey (1983-1984) outlined in the Profile of Disabled Persons in Canada (1986, p.16), "44% of those with a disability have eight or fewer years of schooling, compared to 17% in the non-disabled population." Both this report and a more recent review of training and educational programs for social assistance recipients (Perrin, 1987), recognizes the necessity of education, and in particular literacy skills, for full integration and community participation. Education is an important factor related to income, job access and social status in general.

Consumers with disabilities, who at present have or who at one time had literacy needs have expressed two particular areas of concern: accessibility and outreach.

There are important and often overlooked issues within the large context of accessibility. The most obvious is inappropriate architectural designs. This includes: barriers (e.g. stairs) which restrict persons with limited mobility from gaining access from street level, classroom or office designs which restrict people who use wheelchairs from free and easy movement and washroom facilities which cannot accommodate wheelchair users.

There are other equally important accessibility issues which are often not addressed. For many "potential learners" with disabilities, attendant care (i.e. assistance with turning a page, eating or using washroom facilities) is a necessary service. Communication assisting devices (e.g. computers) are also essential for the delivery of literacy tutoring to potential learners with restricted movement, a sensory impairment or the inability to vocalize thoughts.

The most significant accessibility factor examined in

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this report exists within the minds of the literacy practioners: prejudice. Myths, innocently attributed to people with disabilities (e.g. "those people are just too slow to be able to learn to read and write" or "we just don't have the expertise to teach these people") are voiced out of ignorance. However innocent, the consequence of ignorance handicaps potential learners with disabilities by creating the most impenetrable and often unconscious barrier influencing all other accessibility factors.

The second general concern examined in this report is the effectiveness of literacy outreach programs in their delivery of literacy information to the disabled population. According to the ministries, offices, agencies and programs which mandates include literacy and/or disability issues, there are presently no formal programs which provide literacy information and referral services to consumers with disabilities.

The majority of people with disabilities living in institutions contacted in this research have stated that although they have expressed a need to increase their reading and writing skills, they have never been approached with nor have they received any information about literacy programs. Potential learners with disabilities, who are presently living outside of chronic care centres offer similar statements. Furthermore, a directory of accessible literacy programs for potential learners with disabilities wishing to make such inquiries does not yet exist.

In eliminating these problem areas, it is necessary, as we shall see, for new partnerships to develop between the various programs responsible for assisting people with disabilities and those attending to the literacy needs of the public. Only by cooperation will it be possible to replace the term, "potential learner" with "learner".

1.3. Method

Two methods of research were used in this report: review of documentation and interviews. The documents received included: program descriptions, descriptive and analytical reports by both government and community-based organizations, . government and non-government reports on literacy issues and on disabilities issues.

Questionnaires (see Appendix) were used to interview

15 potential adult learners with disabilities and 15 community based literacy programs in the Toronto area (including: Toronto, North York, York, Willowdale and Scarborough). Both questionnaires were regularly revised in accordance with the needs and comments expressed by adults with disabilities who presently have or who at one time had literacy needs.

Interviews were also held with a number of government officials responsible for literacy services and services assisting people with disabilities as well as with others knowledgeable about these programs. Coordinators and supervisors from a range of community support services and researchers from both the government and the private sector were also contacted.

Many of the informants spoke freely to me about the strengths and limitations of their own programs, as well as of other programs with which they were familiar. Anonymity has been granted to the helpful informants whose comments were often, "off the record", as well to the consumers with disabilities who, through their expressed concerns, have been instrumental in the direction of this investigation. For these reasons a list of persons interviewed is not provided.

1.4. Limitations

The scope of this study is geographically limited to the Metro Toronto area previously mentioned. However, studies and background material outside of this jurisdiction are used.

This research is intended to be an overview rather rather than a detailed examination of any particular programs, projects or issues. Consequently, it is likely that this report does not include significant aspects of some of the programs and issues identified.

Although, programs which target adults with disabilities are mentioned, emphasis is placed on programs which target the literacy deliverers. In addition, the scope of this report includes only community-based literacy programs involved in the delivery of adult basic literacy tutoring; therefore, no mention is made of continuing education or English as a second language programs.

The types of disability conditions which are implicitly addressed in this report include: disability of mobility, sensory impairments (i.e. visual and auditory) and mental handicaps. This report does not examine the issues surrounding the delivery of literacy tutoring pertaining to learners with psychiatric problems, drug problems or learning disabilities.

Time and manpower are the most significant limitations. Although I was assisted by others, the majority of the research was conducted by myself over a short period. Consequently, I was unable to meet with more than a small group of adults with disabilities and literacy needs. Access to many institutions was not possible due to the lengthy bureaucratic process insisted on by administrative officials. This speaks volumes in itself. Contacting consumers with disabilities living in the community was, similarly, a lengthy and difficult task. Due to the limitations of time and manpower, some disability groups are not represented; most notably, adults with auditory impairments.

Another limitation was the scarcity of information on the literacy issues surrounding adults with disabilities. It was quickly evident that there is presently no known Canadian literature specifically reporting these issues. Therefore, much of this report is based on interviews and creative use of indirectly related material.

Chapter 2. The Target Population

In order for the reader to become sensitive to the literacy needs of the adult disabled population, it is necessary to briefly be introduced to the environments and lifestyles of the consumers contacted in this research.

The consumers targeted in this report are adults (over 21) with disabilities who have literacy needs. In the context of this report the term, "disability" refers to a limitation of function that results directly from an impairment at the level of a specific organ or body system. Complex classifications and descriptions of the various disability types are not offered unless directly related to handicapping circumstances. Intricate descriptions of disabilities confuse the issues and misdirect attention which should be focused on handicapping factors restricting people from full community integration and participation.

The 15 consumers who assisted this research were either living in an institution or in the community. The following account of their environments and lifestyles are largely based on their comments.

2.1. Institutional Life

Institutional life is very regimented. Routines are religiously adhered to by staff who control their "clients" (often referred to as, "kids") sleeping hours, meals, social activities and education. Consumers who are presently living or who at one time lived in institutions mention that autonomy is stripped away by the regimented life and patronizing approach of staff.

> It's like a million mothers controlling you all the time. I got no control in here (Jim).

Privacy and identity are severely limited in an institutional environment. In this self-contained city all clients share quarters, eat together and participate in preset social activities as a group. Furthermore, clients are often identified in terms of a disability category. Labels, which lower staffs' and clients' expectations of the social and

educational development of clients, help to create a framework wherein community integration and participation is not a viable alternative to institutional life.

Special education courses conducted in institutions rarely offer the practical instruction necessary for independent community living. Small group classes, which may include students with a ten year age difference, provide music therapy (i.e. listening to music), story telling, Bliss board instruction and unstructured literacy tutoring within one short-lived class. Although vocational rehabilitation courses have recently been included in the curriculum, the consumers contacted in this research have all complained that there is still a failure to provide instruction in job hunting, application procedures for necessary services or other practical instruction for independent living.

These and many other factors have conditioned institutionalized individuals to maintain a dependency on staff and others for their direction in life. The repercussions are: low self-esteem, limited independence, fragile identity, little knowledge of community life and its opportunities and a depreciated outlook of their own potential. However, this is not to say that these persons are without the motivation to gain knowledge and independence.

> I want to learn like anyone else, but it takes a bit longer; I got the motivation and I sure want the independence (Jill).

2.2. Community Life

The people contacted who are now living in the community have all been, at one time, institutionalized. Many are still finding it difficult to cope with community life. Some have mentioned that it's a "culture shock". The biggest hardship encountered is access to community integration and participation.

Although these individuals are technically living in the community, in terms of geography, they are still being segregated. Two people I met with, ages 25 and 32, are presently living in an apartment building where attendant care is offered; the majority of the other tenants are over the age of 65. The disabled population living in the community rarely go on

dates, are usually not invited to parties, are stereotyped and grouped with other traditionally devalued people and are limited to the few areas of the city (i.e. entertainment centres, shopping malls, restaurants, etc.) which are accessible.

All of the individuals with disabilities with whom I met mentioned that they are continually stigmatized by the community in terms of their disability. More often than not, they are judged by their disability, rather than by their ability. This was cited as being a major influence perpetuating segregation.

People with disabilities are also segregated in the work force. Prejudicial attitudes, based on ignorance, held by some employers combined with the lack of qualifications, due to inappropriate or inaccessible education, of the disabled population, are just two of the many factors which dictate the vocational direction of the adult with a disability. Many work for little pay (sometimes for $2.00 per day) for sheltered workshops designed specifically for the disabled population. Others volunteer in programs which provide services to people with disabilities. It should not be surprising to learn that people with disabilities are the largest group of social assistance recipients; an unfavourable financial and social position.

> I really need to get a good paying job and get off of F.B.A. (Family Benefits Allowance). I don't like feeling financially dependent on the government; especially when they barely meet my financial needs (Doug).

There are, of course, adults with disabilities who are more integrated than the consumers mentioned above. It is essential to note that these integrated few are literate and have been provided with the appropriate education necessary for their social and vocational pursuits. Although community integration and participation is possible for the able-bodied illiterate population, it is near impossible for the disabled illiterate population to attain the same status.

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Chapter 3. Issues and Needs of Literacy Tutoring

This chapter reports the responses of the adults targeted with the questionnaire (see Appendix). Their comments describe the importance of literacy tutoring in relation to their needs and goals in life. Their responses also identify the changes and developments which are needed to ensure opportunities for literacy tutoring in integrated community-based adult basic literacy programs.

Much of social exchange takes place in the form of the written word; letters between friends, poetry, books, reports, newspapers, magazines, manuals, instructions, road signs, graffiti, etc. These communications help to create social bonds, provide information on health and welfare, information on human rights, assist vocational pursuits and in general, enrich individuals' spiritual, emotional and intellectual centres. However, these social avenues are not accessible to the illiterate population. The illiterate individual is, therefore, restricted from many areas of community participation as well as limited in terms of personal growth.

For the individual with a disability who is already affected by the restrictions from many areas of community life, the need for literacy skills - the need for personal growth - is great. The consumers who assisted this report felt that a positive correlation exists between independence, self-esteem, confidence and potential, and literacy skills. Literacy empowers the individual with the ability to gain knowledge and to express one's self; the result is increased control over present living circumstances, direction, and realization of future goals. Conversely, illiteracy further handicaps the individual with a disability by restricting the means for knowledge, expression and growth.

3.1. A Need For Effective Communication

Four of the fifteen consumers I met with were unable to vocalize their thoughts. Their method of communication employed either an alphabet board (a board containing letters of the alphabet and numbers, 0 through 9) or a Bliss board (a series of symbols representing words) on which they formulated their messages. Unlike the other consumers who possessed the power of speech, these four consumers

viewed upgrading literacy skills as the only means for increasing their ability to communicate. The need to acquire means for increasing reading and writing skills was most emphatically expressed by the individuals using the Bliss boards. Since, Bliss board users are only familiar with Bliss symbols (pictographic symbols) and not with the alphabet, their ability to express intricate thoughts and feelings is restricted by the limited and simplistic words and phrases represented on these boards. Moreover, use and knowledge of this language is confined to a very small group of people making this an impractical and handicapping method of communication.

All fifteen consumers believed that the written word is the most effective and powerful mode of communication. Some wanted to write about their disabilities so that others could learn about their life perspective. These consumers felt that if the able-bodied population could read about the thoughts, experiences and needs of the disabled population, myths attributed to people with disabilities would be dispelled, thereby paving the way for integration and understanding. The consumers also felt that through the possession of literacy skills, barriers which exist within and around the person with a disability could be challenged.

> If I could write about the crap I have to deal with because of my disability, I think things would change. They probably wouldn't change a lot, but at least I'd be able to say something instead of just sitting here all nice and quiet. I think that if I could write, then people could just read about what I have to say and they wouldn't be so freaked-out by the way I look and totally miss the point (Kevin).

3.1.1. Gaining Employment

Without good literacy skills, job hunting is severely hindered and job application forms become indecipherable, intimidating documents. In a society where fierce competition is common in the job marketplace, job applications must also be accompanied by a well written and impressive resume. For the applicant with a disability, the resume must be able to convince the employer to recognize the abilities, rather than to dwell on the disabilities, of the

potential employee. This is a difficult task when a person is confronted by an employer with prejudicial attitudes; it is an impossible task if the applicant is also illiterate.

Potential employment opportunities are sometimes limited by the nature of the disability. Some physical disabilities may restrict people from manual labor. If this is the case the individual must rely on intellectual and communication skills. Without proper literacy tutoring and good education, these skills are beyond reach and consequently, employment is not possible.

In a report which examines social assistance programs and recipients (Perrin, 1987), illiteracy is recognized as the major contributor to poverty and to dependence on social assistance. Perrin notes that the functionally illiterate population is primarily employed in the manufacturing sectors. This mode of employment is not only impossible for some people with disabilities, there is also an increasing move away from a manufacturing to an information-based economy which necessitates strong literacy skills for potential employment.

> Once I get a fairly good handle on my reading, I would like to get into computer programming and make a comfortable living (Doug).
>
> Journalism has always interested me but I have to first upgrade my reading and writing skills (Josephine).
>
> It would be great to get a job and get into the community; you need to read and write to do that, so that's what I want to learn to do (Jill).

3.1.2. Access and Control of Services

Like most people in society, individuals with disabilities depend on a variety of services which assist in their daily routines. The disabled population relies on attendant care services (i.e., personal care, assisting with cooking, cleaning, bathroom activities, etc.), accessible transportation services and health care services, to name a few. Many of these services have adopted the medical approach and are organized within a bureaucratic

framework, wherein directive counselling, assessment and documentation rule.

In order for a person to gain assistance, the consumer must first discover the organization responsible for providing the needed service. This is only possible by investigating the mandates and guidelines of the various programs. This requires both research and literacy skills. Upon discovery of a suitable assistance program, the consumer must undergo a series of physical and psychological assessments and complete an involved and lengthy document describing the consumer's needs and history. This process is often multiplied in complexity when delivery of the needed services involves the cooperation of two or more programs. The consumer who is illiterate must rely on family, friends, social advocates or health-care staff to access and provide the necessary information. This is frustrating for the consumer whose needs and control are compromised by others.

> Right now I have to get help from my friends or from my social advocate so I can get assistance. They find out about the programs and write out all the stuff for me. It's really frustrating because I want to be able to do all of that and make sure I'm getting the most out of a program but right now I can't because I can't even read what they're offering. (Jim).

3.2. A Need For Accessible Literacy Programs

The consumers I met with had very specific demands for the delivery of literacy tutoring. At the top of the list was accessibility to fully integrated, community-based literacy programs. The consumers were eager to increase their literacy skills but reluctant to do so in a segregated setting. They explained that, in part, their motive for gaining literacy skills was to prove to themselves and to others that they can participate in the community like anyone else and that a segregated means to this end is a step in the wrong direction.

To be accessible, community based literacy programs must be free of all architectural barriers, be able to provide attendant care, have access to communication assisting devices and most importantly, be free of prejudicial attitudes.

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3.2.1. Prejudicial Attitudes

The most important concern that the consumers had, in terms of gaining access to and receiving proper literacy tutoring, was the problem of confronting prejudicial attitudes. All of the consumers had many experiences of being put down, restricted and shunned by others. Many have been told, repeatedly, that they do not have the capacity for literacy skills. None of these people want a repeat of these experiences.

Some of the consumers felt that many literacy practitioners have very little, if any, knowledge and understanding about living with a disability. Because of this they in turn believed that tutors would be reluctant to teach the disabled population. Some consumers felt that literacy practitioners might be affected by the long history of the medical approach to people with disabilities.

> Everyone looks at you like your're sick or something. They see your disability easy enough, but they don't see what you can do. I just don't want some teacher thinking that I'm not able to learn just 'cause I'm disabled (John).

The consumers who were mechanically slow at communicating their thoughts were concerned that literacy practitioners might interpret this as being an indication of intellectual disability and of the slow rate of thought processes. This common misconception sets limits in the mind of the tutor, with respect to the potential of literacy development for the learner.

3.2.2. Architectural Accessibility

Architectural accessibility is the most basic requirement for integration. The many architectural designs which act as barriers to the disabled population are often overlooked. Curbs and stairs pose immediate obstacles to people who use wheelchairs. The simple, and sometimes costly solution to these barriers, is to provide ramps and elevators. However, occasionally, ramps and elevators which are provided in some buildings are poorly designed and are, themselves, barriers. Washroom facilities must also be barrier free allowing for easy access to toilets, sinks, towels, waste

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disposals and mirrors.

A consistently overlooked issue is the provision of large-type or braille signs for people with visual impairments. These simple provisions serve to welcome the learner who may already feel uncomfortable returning to the study of language. Poor architectural design is often the only barrier for the consumer with a disability who wishes to participate in a small group literacy class.

Consumers, particularly those who were living in the community, expressed anger towards inaccessible community-based programs which, supposedly, provide services to the public.

> It's extremely upsetting to learn about places which are set-up for the public but are not accessible to wheelchairs. It's like telling me that because I use a wheelchair I'm not a part of the community (Kevin).

3.2.3. Communication Assisting Devices (CADs)

Essential to the process of upgrading reading and writing skills are the tools of literacy; the pen and paper being the most common. But for some people with disabilities, more creative and advanced tools are needed for the realization of literacy goals. For example, seven of the fifteen consumers, whom I contacted, were unable to manipulate a pen. However, they all felt comfortable with a keyboard and mentioned that a computer would be the easiest machine to use. The computer allows for added hardware (e.g. switch pads, enlarged keyboards, laser controls, etc.) and software which can assist the learner who has difficulty with accessing keys on the conventional keyboard. Consumers, who use mouthsticks or headpointers, favored the soft-touch computer keyboard over the mechanical typewriter for obvious reasons.

Some consumers with visual impairments may also be in need of assisting devices. For these individuals, braille machines or large print typewriters provide the necessary means for acquiring literacy skills.

When asked if it was possible to personally acquire a CAD, the consumers stated that it was near impossible to find the necessary funding to assist them in this purchase. They mentioned that although

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the Vocational Rehabilitation Services, (VRS), (operated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, MCSS) is set-up to assist consumers in this way, they are reluctant to assist in the purchase of a CAD for the sole purpose of upgrading literacy skills. The consumers also mentioned that although the Assistive Devices Program, (operated by the Ministry of Health) provides financial assistance for the purchase of CADs, they have not yet recognized the adult population (however, this is changing and shortly the ADP will be supporting adults). In addition, upon acquiring a CAD, it would not be possible to transport a computer (the most effective and attractive CAD) to and from a literacy program.

Trial and error should be the rule of thumb for all consumers who are in need of CADs. The consumers expressed a need for the opportunity to experiment with a variety of devices and determine the most effective tool for literacy upgrading. CADs should aid and not hinder the learner. It is, therefore, crucial for both the learner and the tutor to determine whether a more effective CAD exists or if creative adjustments are in order.

3.2.4. Personal Support

Like any potential learner, consumers with disabilities expressed a need for personal support from literacy practitioners. Personal support, in context of the time needed for a literacy class, translates into emotional support, motivational support and, in some cases, assistance during mealtime, washroom activities, or even turning pages of the lesson book. Without this simple assistance, many people with disabilities are not able to enrol in a literacy class. One gentleman with whom I met, explained that the only reason that he is presently unable to participate in an integrated literacy class is that no one is willing to help him go to the bathroom. Because there are some people who feel uncomfortable providing this service, this gentleman is restricted from the literacy tutoring-style he needs (i.e. a small group or class setting) in order to meet his vocational goals.

According to the consumers, personal support is often provided by friends, family, and assistants contracted by VRS. While friends and family members could, at times, provide this assistance during literacy

tutoring sessions, their reliability is subject to their own daily schedules.

VRS is reluctant to offer these services to consumers wishing to upgrade their literacy skills without a particular vocation in mind. In order to acquire assistance from MCSS, an individual with a disability must be in pursuit of a vocational goal. However, many of the individuals contacted in this research commented that their knowledge of employment opportunities was extremely limited due to their sheltered lifestyles and restricted literacy skills. These consumers felt that it was unfair for MCSS to expect consumers with limited knowledge, in this respect, to make important decisions within the short time span needed for assessment. Moreover, consumers were perturbed that MCSS does not support, with respect to attendant care, literacy upgrading, nor does it recognize this as an important and necessary means for community integration and participation. However, it must be noted that MCSS has now recognized the importance of literacy upgrading and has begun to change its policies. For instance, recently it has become involved in supporting newly established literacy programs like "Beat The Street" which is run by Frontier College.

By offering personal support, community ABL programs would be filling in overlooked gaps and sending out a welcome message to the adults in our community who have been traditionally restricted from integrated literacy classes.

3.3. A Need For Literacy Outreach

The consumers expressed a need for a literacy information outreach program. Most of the consumers had almost no knowledge of any community based program designed to increase literacy skills. Moreover, some stated that I had been the first person ever to approach them with concerns relating to their literacy needs. Because they have not received any literacy information or support, many feel that their goal to upgrade their reading and writing skills will never be realized.

Only seven out of the fifteen consumers were familiar with the term, "literacy tutoring." Two of these people had received direct experience of literacy programs, while the remaining five had received simple and often distorted descriptions from friends,

family and health care assistants who, according to these consumers, paid little attention to their specific literacy needs and goals. These descriptions led the consumers to perceive literacy programs as mainstream academic programs and/or educational programs offered in the institutions. Consequently, earlier experiences of defeat and intimidation associated with these formal programs created a less than positive view of the community-based literacy programs. As soon as I dispelled these erroneous connections and described some of the tenets of community-based literacy programs (i.e. a "grass roots" structure, creative tutoring, the learner centred philosophy, etc.) fears were replaced with motivation for success.

The literacy outreach needs of the consumers differed for individuals living in the community from individuals living in an institution.

3.3.1. Outreach in the Institution

The people living in an institution expressed a need to meet directly with a representative (i.e., a coordinator, supervisor, teacher or tutor) of a literacy program. These consumers felt that this would be the most effective means for obtaining information about and gaining access to a literacy program. This would also provide them with the opportunity to express, without compromise, their literacy needs and goals.

In light of their regimented and conditioning environments, it was not surprising to learn that these same individuals had a reluctance to contact programs on their own initiative. For these people, the outside world - community life - is confusing and intimidating. Literacy programs, while being a part of the community setting, are an access through which much of the confusion and intimidation can be alleviated. For these consumers, this is an attractive welcome mat; however, it is a welcome mat which must first be placed at their doorsteps. This would not only ease the fear and tension of entering into the unknown, it would also demonstrate genuine interest and concern for the consumers' behalf, a necessary ingredient for the development of a good tutor-learner relationship.

The consumers gave three reasons for meeting with a representative in their (i.e. the consumers') own

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environment. First, the consumers expressed a strong desire for the tutor to understand their present living arrangements and in so doing become more sensitive to their needs while understanding the limitations set by their environment. Secondly, the overwhelming task of locating an accessible and available community programs would be eliminated. These consumers indicated that they would abandon hopes for discovering and enrolling in an accessible ABL program if faced with two or three rejections; in light of the scarcity of accessible community ABL programs, this would be a likely scenario. Thirdly, a representative would carry the authority to enrol a potential learner into an ABL program at the time of the meeting; or at least schedule an appointment for an introductory lesson or assessment needed for enrolment. The consumers stated that they would not respond favorably to a representative who would merely provide information about literacy programs and then leave a phone number where they could be contacted.

Maxine has been institutionalized for most of her life. During the interview, she expressed a strong need to increase her reading and writing skills and asked if I could help to enrol her in a literacy program. I responded the best I could which was to provide her with information on accessible ABL programs and recommend that she contact the programs herself. I again met met with Maxine three weeks later and found that she had not contacted any of the programs which I mentioned.

> I guess I'm just scared to phone them (i.e. ABL programs). I don't even know them. They'll probably just say that I can't join anyway. I think it would be better if they came here 'cause then I'd know that there's an opening for me and that they would really care (Maxine).

3.3.2. Outreach in the Community

Consumers living in the community requested that a directory of accessible ABL programs be made available. These individuals saw this as a simple request and felt that as citizens of the community, such information was a right and not a privilege. Some of these consumers mentioned that they had failed a number of times trying to locate an accessible ABL program on their own. They also

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expressed annoyance at those who should be responsible for providing this information.

> There's so much money being spent on programs which keep disabled people in institutions and out of the community. Why can't they take some of this money and spend it on some research which looks at the accessible areas in the community? I mean, if you want to join a literacy program you have to call a million places before you find one that's willing to take you. It would be much easier if I could just call one place and find out which programs are presently accessible. I don't think I'm asking too much (Doug).

3.4. A Need For An Information Brokerage

Similar comments to the one above were made about the process of locating the support services needed to participate in a literacy program. Consumers expressed frustration in relation to the time and effort needed to access and coordinate these services (i.e. attendant care, assisting devices, transportation, etc.) and stated that this process is, in itself, a deterrent to the realization of literacy goals.

These consumers expressed a need for a one-stop information centre which could provide a listing of all the available support services. They felt that this type of centre would be able to assist both the consumer and the literacy program. They indicated that those responsible for literacy tutoring may not feel so reluctant to establish an integrated setting if support of this kind was provided. The process of locating support services would no longer be a Herculean task and the potential for integration would be positively reinforced.

3.5. Summary of Needs

* A need to acquire effective literacy skills as a means for effective communication in the pursuit of establishing full integration and participation.

* A need to acquire effective literacy skills for the purpose of gaining employment.

* A need to acquire effective literacy skills for the purpose of increasing access to and control of necessary assisting services.

* A need for literacy tutoring to be conducted in accessible community-based literacy programs.

* A need for literacy practitioners to dispense with the myths often attributed to people with disabilities.

* A need for ABL programs to be architecturally accessible.

* A need for ABL programs to have knowledge of and access to communication assisting devices.

* A need for ABL programs to offer personal support to learners who are in need of encouragement towards their literacy goals and assistance with washroom activities, during mealtimes or with other simple physical activities.

* A need for literacy outreach targeted to people living in an institution by a representative of an accessible ABL programs.

* A need for a directory of accessible ABL programs.

* A need for an information brokerage from which information on available support services can be acquired.

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Chapter 4. Program Reviews

This chapter briefly discusses some of the programs responsible for the delivery of literacy tutoring to the community. Programs are analysed in context of the needs associated with literacy tutoring identified by adults with disabilities in the preceeding chapter. Strengths and limitations of these programs are examined in relation to the degree to which these needs are being addressed and met.

There are countless programs in Toronto which directly and indirectly provide literacy tutoring to the community which are not mentioned in this report. Although the scope of this report is limited to the examination of community-based adult basic literacy programs, many of the comments and concerns addressed in this investigation are equally applicable to any program which includes a literacy tutoring component.

There are many critical comments in this chapter which are directed to the programs contacted in this research. They are not intended to incite a defensive response from anyone or any program since it is clear that a cooperative effort is necessary for the realisation of unconditional accessibilty. It is hoped that the reader of this report will recognize the signicance of these comments and assist in this cooperative effort.

Most literacy programs are relatively new as is the attention directed towards integration and participation of all citizens. Because of this, the reality of unconditional accessibility is still only a theoretical possibility. Literacy programs, both old and new must begin to include accessibility as a standard issue integral to the operation of a program thereby changing the status of unconditional accessibility from theory to reality.

This chapter begins by describing the present activities of the Interministerial Committee on ABL. A more detailed examination of the present and future support from the Ministry of Skills Development for the delivery of literacy tutoring follows. This chapter then presents analyses of the factors of accessibility associated with literacy tutoring in community-based literacy programs and finally a discussion of literacy umbrella groups is presented.

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4.1. The Interministerial Committee on ABL

In June 1986, the Cabinet approved a comprehensive, cross-ministry plan for Adult Basic Literacy (ABL). The plan focuses on the needs of special groups which the government has recognized as being disadvantaged. These target groups include: Native Peoples, the unemployed, senior citizens, persons in the correctional system, sole support mothers and people with disabilities.

The plan identifies the Ministries of Skills Development, Education, Citizenship, Community and Social Services, Colleges and Universities and Correctional Services as deliverers of literacy programs. The Ministry of Skills Development (MSD) has recently adopted (i.e. since Sept. 29, 1987) the lead role formerly held by the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture. To assist the MSD, an Interministerial Committee on ABL, comprised of the above mentioned ministries, has been established.

The government plan for the Committee is to provide feedback and recommendations to the MSD in the performance of its lead role functions. These functions include: coordinating and liaising with local service providers, providing information to the public, including a literacy hot-line service, undertaking public awareness programs, sponsoring research and other special projects, developing a central resource collection and producing and coordinating the development of instructional and training materials, with particular emphasis on materials for groups with specialized needs and undertaking review and evaluation of literacy services across Ontario.

The committee is also responsible for the development of three on-going task groups entitled: Access, Evaluation and Communications. These task groups are chaired by appointed directors from the MSD and are comprised of delegates from the other ministries represented on the Committee. The Communications Task Group ensures effective marketing of literacy information to the public and encourages increased involvement in literacy of all sectors in the community. The Evaluation Task Group is responsible for the ongoing review and evaluation of ABL programs in terms of: equitable distribution of services to communities and target groups, access for groups with specialized needs and the efficiency and effectiveness of ABL programs. The purpose of the

Access Task Group is to encourage equitable distribution of services and minimize duplications and gaps with respect to funding, training and development of practitioners, development of materials and access to services for groups with specialized needs.

4.1.1. Limitations

On paper, the mandates and directions of the Interministerial Committee on ABL and its task groups look promising. The literacy needs and concerns expressed by people with disabilities will be, for the first time, examined and strategies to remedy the problem areas will be developed. However, the degree to which these issues will be addressed and the effectiveness of the Committee and its task groups is yet to be established. Research and development in this area is still in the rudimentary stages and many of the literacy needs of adults with disabilities have not yet been discovered. To make these discoveries, it is necessary to break the traditional methods of research employed by the government (i.e. conducting a literature review which, in this case, is impossible, and interviewing various programs and so-called "experts" in the field) and opt for the more effective and accurate approach of meeting with the consumers directly. Armchair speculations must be abandoned if the needs of the public are ever to be satisfied.

4.2. The Ministry of Skills Development (MSD)

Presently, the only ministry which has already made concerted efforts in identifying and meeting the literacy needs and concerns of people with disabilities is the MSD.

As mentioned, the MSD has taken the lead role for ABL tutoring in the community. They have taken initial steps to ensure accessibility for all groups to community-based ABL programs. In this pursuit, MSD has hired Tracy Odell (a certified teacher and an experienced literacy practitioner who has a physical disability) to examine the present accessibility status of each ABL program in Ontario. Odell also makes recommendations and initiates projects which are intended to increase literacy practitioners' awareness of the issues which surround literacy upgrading for the adult disabled population. In fact, this

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investigation was conducted largely because of Odell's recognition of the paucity of literature in this area.

MSD is also actively involved in financially supporting ABL programs which need assistance in providing an unconditionally accessible tutoring space. MSD offers the Ontario Community Literacy (OCL) Grants program and the Special Project Fund (SPF).

4.2.1. Ontario Community Literacy (OCL) Grants Program

The purpose of the program is to enhance the development and delivery of community ABL programs and services for Ontario residents. The program is a response to the individuals who are restricted by their literacy level from participating fully in society and to the individuals who have been unable to benefit from the existing institutional delivery system. The OCL Grants Program provides funds to existing non profit community-based organizations which are providing outreach and referral for all ABL programs and/or are deliverers of ABL programs which are convenient and provide relevant instruction and content to the participants.

This program is making an effort to support only those programs which are sensitive to and which are meeting the literacy needs of the community. However, the terms of eligibility do not restrict funding to programs which are not fully accessible to all groups. The phrases, "convenient to the participant" and "content relevant to participants" imply that literacy programs are only responsible for the learners that they have identified and that they are not held accountable for the individuals who are restricted (i.e. by inappropriate architectural designs, etc.) from benefiting from their programs. MSD has included certain criteria which, at face value, minimizes this selective process. In particular, organizations must subscribe to the intent of the Ontario Human Rights Code and must also make their ABL services available through appropriate outreach to potential users in their community. However, the effectiveness of these safeguards are relative to the level of awareness with respect to: the factors which constitute "appropriate outreach", the consumer groups who are "potential users" and the circumstances which breach the Ontario Human Rights Code. In context of the consumer group with disabilities, these are relatively new issues and

have not yet been fully investigated. Therefore, these criteria, at best, are future protection following an investigation of the literacy delivery to people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups, against restricted accessibility and participation, and, at worst, these criteria perpetuate the present selective accessibility circumstance.

Under a separate section of the same program, entitled, Stream B, funds are made available for projects including "start-up projects" to initiate programs and services. It is possible for a non-profit ABL program to access funds for new equipment, material, support services, coordinator salary, operating expenses and needs assessment for the purpose of setting-up new programs and services. The only variable which is not supported by this section is instructional salaries; otherwise it is open to a wide range of funding possibilities.

Stream B also provides funding for research in needs assessment of potential learners and research on methods of delivery and instruction. This section also supports development of innovative approaches to the delivery of programs, development of materials and curriculum and tutor-training. This provides an excellent opportunity for ABL programs to prepare their programs with the means for integrating any consumer group with literacy needs. MSD provides another funding program which supports similar augmentation to extant ABL programs; that is, the Special Project Fund.

4.2.2. Special Project Fund (SPF)

The Special Project Fund (SPF) is similar to Stream B of the OCL Grant Program. The purpose of the SPF is to provide financial assistance to initiatives which promote, demonstrate and/or develop new approaches to making programs more accessible, effective and efficient, especially as they relate to increasing the participation and success of individuals traditionally unrepresented in skills training.

Like most of the programs mentioned in this paper, this is relatively new. Subsequently, there is rigorous development of criteria for funding eligibility and it is, therefore, like Stream B, open to a wide range of funding possibilities. For

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instance, it is possible to gain financial assistance for the development of disability training/awareness programs and for the development of outreach strategies which target the disabled population with literacy needs. Projects which augment current ABL programs with increased services for persons with disabilities are, as well, supported by this program.

Although MSD provides financial support to programs which initiate augmentation projects and services that effectively target traditionally disadvantaged and unrepresented groups or individuals, it is the responsibility of the literacy practitioners and coordinators to take advantage of these incentives.

In order for the ABL programs to take advantage of Stream B funding and the SPF for the purpose of developing integrated programs, they first must be made aware of the existing problems. In response to this, MSD has begun to conduct research and development in the area of literacy delivery to the adult population with disabilities.

4.2.3. Access Research and Development

MSD has been investigating, since Sept. 1987, the extent to which people with disabilities are currently being served by their community ABL programs. All 124 ABL programs funded by MSD received a questionnaire which addressed this issue as well as requesting feedback about how to better equip their programs in meeting the needs of potential learners who have disabilities. Only 69% (79 programs) responded to the questionnaire implying a lack of concern and/or awareness of the issues which should be integral to the interests of all literacy programs.

The results of the research indicated a real need for awareness of the literacy needs of and methods of literacy delivery to people with disabilities. The programs which did participate indicated a need to increase their training/awareness of tutors, training/awareness of core staff, physical access and knowledge of potential learners with disabilities, prioritized in that order. The programs also responded by indicating their preference for a one day workshop or seminar with a training/awareness format.

In acknowledgement of the findings, MSD has initiated

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the development of a training/awareness package for literacy practitioners with respect to the issues affecting the placement and instruction of learners who have disabilities. The format of this training program was initially designed to be an interactive, participatory video to be used as an aid in training and orientation sessions. TV Ontario (TVO) has received funding from MSD and the Department of Secretary of State to produce the video package. Because TVO is required, by it mandate, to produce programs targeted to the public, the initial concept of an interactive and participatory format has been replaced by a format more amenable to public viewing. Subsequently, the video package will be closer, in style, to an information program rather than a training program.

The program, to be released in March 1989, will be produced in two half hour videos. The first video will examine some of the issues which have adversely affected disabled learners' access to educational services over the years. The video will also demonstrate that integrated educational opportunities are a superior tactic both for the community and for the people with disabilities.

The second video will describe some generic, integrated literacy instructional techniques for learners who have a disability. Some of the topics which may be included are: how and where to obtain specific assisting devices, funding sources, different means of effective communication and clarification of popular misconceptions of learning potential for people with disabilities.

This information program has the potential for being an excellent source of information for the community and for the literacy programs which are interested in actively integrating people with disabilities. Moreover, this program will open the eyes of the many who are unaware of the problems which plague the disabled population. By increasing the awareness of these problems, this program will begin to dissolve the first barrier to integration; that is, ignorance.

4.2.4. A Guide To Funding Sources

A common complaint from the ABL coordinators is the difficulty of accessing financial support. A paucity of funding sources and the perpetual change of

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policies which regulate eligibility for assistance, help to deter ABL coordinators from making changes and augmentations to their programs necessary for the integration and participation of all citizens.

In response to this problem, MSD is currently preparing an information package on funding sources which offer assistance to programs. The source sheet on funding will identify and describe funding sources which, although not specifically targeted to literacy programs, are available to literacy programs if accessed properly. Proposal strategies for the funding sources, to be listed in this package, will be discussed in context of the specific policies and mandates for each funding program. One of the intents of this source sheet, which will include government sources as well as community-based sources, is to promote effective means for full integration in ABL programs. This guide will be available in the Fall of this year.

4.2.5. Limitations

When MSD took over the responsibility for ABL delivery from the former Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, the funding programs, CPG - community project grants and CFIP - community facilities improvement program, from which MCC provided support for accessibility (eg. ramps, communication assisting devices, etc.) were no longer accessible to literacy groups as the latter were no longer clients of the Ministry of Citizenship. Consequently, there are presently little funds available for the adjustments and augmentations needed to make ABL programs accessible to all citizens.

MSD holds intra and interministerial discussions on the topic of accessibility to literacy programs and has begun to actively create and disseminate information on disability awareness. However, raising awareness within Government and in the community, in and of itself, is not enough. Without financial support, community ABL programs cannot provide ramps, elevators, communication assisting devices or other assisting items. Without financial support, unconditional accessibility will remain a future possibility rather than a present reality. Therefore, MSD should begin to examine the monetary translation of accessibility and begin to develop effective strategies for financial assistance.

As mentioned, MSD and the National Literacy Secretariat

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have funded TVO to develop a program for the purpose of informing the community of the need for accessible and integrated programs. This is long overdue and must be accompanied by an even more rigorous awareness program which specifically targets ABL programs. Without this, it is almost certain that MSD will not receive any requests for support in this area from ABL coordinators in the near future.

MSD is also limited in regard to their literacy information outreach to the public. MSD offers to the public a directory of ABL programs across Ontario. Nowhere in this directory is there any reference to degree of accessibility. As the ministry responsible for information outreach and the delivery of ABL programs to all Ontario citizens, MSD should include information on the accessibility status of each program. By failing to provide this information, MSD is, in effect, ignoring the needs and rights of a significant number of consumers in this province.

During the second draft of this report, I was informed that future directories will include the accessibility status of ABL and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs operated in Ontario.

4.3. Community-based Adult Literacy Programs

Fifteen community-based ABL programs were targeted with questionnaires (see Appendix). The programs contacted included those which operate in association with public libraries, community programs and independent ABL programs. Rather than analyzing programs according to various "classifications", generic descriptions in the context of accessibility will be presented. Inaccessible and, therefore, inappropriate ABL programs will not be named; it is not the intention of this report to put people or groups on the defensive. The only ABL program named in this report is Frontier College. Not without limitations, they are presently the leading program with respect to efforts made towards understanding and meeting the literacy needs of the disabled population. This is not to say that other programs have not made strides towards integration.

There are various degrees of accessibility corresponding to a variety of accessibility factors. For instance, there may be ramps available at the

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street level entrance to a building without any elevators neccessary for a person who uses a wheelchair to access the third floor. The responses to the questionnaires targeted to literacy programs in this research reflects this. With the exception of two programs, none of the programs were completely inaccessible. For simplicity, and not at the expense of accuracy, I have grouped the responses which illustrate restricted access and those which illustrate integration. In the section which identifies the factors of restricted access, I have also included information on some support groups which will help to eliminate these factors.

4.3.1. Factors and Remedies for Restricted Access

Most of the community ABL programs contacted in this research have been operating for a relatively short period of time (i.e. two years, on the average). Like any program, time and experience are the essential ingredients necessary for recognizing and catering to the needs of the public. Without support, it is not possible for an ABL program to open its doors for the first time and provide a service which will meet the ABL needs of the entire public; particularly when there are unrepresented, and, in effect, invisible consumer groups. There is, to date, no literature and very few, little known programs which can provide a literacy program with information or support for recognizing and meeting the literacy needs of people with disabilities. In addition, an ABL program, which is often short-staffed and overworked is, characteristically, engaged in development and organization of the program, rigorous hunting and developing strategies for the few available funding sources and meeting the needs of an overwhelming number of learners. A program teetering on the edge of 'burn-out' will not be quick to add a group of individuals who have needs and limitations above and beyond the able-bodied consumer.

Coordinating staff members of the ABL programs mentioned that shortage of funds was the major stumbling block for providing an accessible and integrated program. This statement was usually followed by an expressed hope for more funds in the future which could make unconditional accessiblity a reality. This 'maybe next year' approach is not well founded. Any coordinator of a non-profit organization can attest to the improbability of ever receiving

sufficient funds commensurate with the needs of the program. By maintaining this passive, 'wait till next year approach, ABL programs will continue to restrict many citizens from ever reaching their literacy goals. Moreover, these same programs have indicated that they have not made any inquiries about available financial assistance projects which support accessibility.

Literacy programs should make immediate efforts towards integration and by so doing raise the interests and support of their funding sources in this area. ABL coordinators must begin to factor in accessibility costs as a standard operating item.

4.3.1.1. Ignorance and Prejudice

Awareness of the issue which surround daily living, social and vocational advancement and educational goals for individuals with disabilities in our society, is fundamental in order to achieve complete accessibility, integration and participation in community-based programs. For the majority of ABL programs targeted in this research, awareness and investigation of these issues were unfounded and were given low priority for future consideration. Only two of the fifteen ABL programs include material on disability issues in their training/awareness programs for tutors and staff. For these reasons many accessibility factors are never properly addressed.

Literacy practitioners from some of the ABL programs commented that there is presently little need for programs to be accessible to the disabled population. The ABL agents explained that they have not received any requests for literacy training from consumers with disabilities and stated that this was evidence of the priority for literacy upgrading for this population. What these practitioners failed to recognize was that the absence of inquiries from the disabled population was not due to insufficient need, but rather due to ABL programs' level of accessibility. It is unlikely that a consumer will contact a program which is inappropriately equipped to meet targeted needs and goals.

ABL agents were also quick to point out that adults with disabilities have 'special' needs and are in a category which necessitates the attendance of professionally trained staff. This remark is deeply rooted in the traditional medical approach to which

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these same practitioners have labeled, "counterproductive" in relation to literacy tutoring. Although, coordinators discourage the use of any labels which they rightly view as being wholly inappropriate, they fail to recognize their adherence to this prejudice vehicle in this case.

Some of the coordinators and tutors also commented that they would be willing to include people with disabilities in their programs if only they were provided with a concise package on tutoring techniques for this population. This comment would often proceed statements which would reflect their "learner centred" philosophy and the importance of treating every learner as a unique individual. At first, this response reads as an antithesis to their philosophies by regarding people with disabilities as a homogeneous group. However, upon further investigation, their request for this package was found to be an indicator of their fear of the unknown - a fear of people with disabilities. It seemed to me that many of the coordinators and tutors were asking for their hands to be held.

Without awareness programs which describe present lifestyles and literacy needs of adults with disabilities, ABL coordinators and tutors will continue to be ignorant of the issues which must be addressed in order to meet the literacy needs of the community. Not only does ignorance lead to restricted accessibility, but more significantly, it leads to prejudice.

To date, there are no Disability Awareness Programs (DAPs) which specifically target literacy programs. However, there are many DAPs which do exist and which have expressed an interest in supporting ABL programs with information.

MSD and TVO, as mentioned earlier (section 4.2.3.), are presently working on a DAP which will look at the literacy needs of potential learners with disabilities and the extent to which these needs are being met by community-based programs. This awareness program will be, with the exception of this report, the first of its kind.

There are a host of other associations which offer DAPs. The most established DAP is associated with the Metro Toronto School Board. This program is presented by Kazumi Tsuruoka and Cindy Burley, both of whom have a disability. Although the program is

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presently targeted to students in elementary schools and in high schools, both Cindy and Kazumi are eager to develop a DAP specifically designed for literacy practitioners. Other groups which offer DAPs include: the Office for Disabled Persons, the Metro Toronto Association for Community Living and Ontario Action Awareness. These groups have expressed an interest and readiness to support ABL programs with the insight necessary for integration and participation of every citizen in our community.

4.3.1.2. Architectural Factors

Community ABL programs are responsible for providing their services to all adult citizens who are in need of literacy upgrading in our community. This responsibility requires programs to offer their services in architecturally accessible learning places. The location of the agency itself should also be free of all architectural barriers.

All of the ABL programs need some support in order to provide architectural accessibility. Seven out of the fifteen programs were completely architecturally inaccessible. The findings from the MSD's research on access (section 4.2.3.) are even more dramatic; 70% of the community-based ABL programs which participated, expressed a need to improve their present physical accessibility status.

In order to be accessible, the program must provide ramps, elevating devices and have an interior design suitable for people who use wheelchairs and for people with sensory impairments. Washrooms too must be accessible. Designs which assist and do not hinder individuals with visual impairments must also be considered. For instance, it is necessary to include braille signs and utilize different textures for walls and floors which will assist with individuals' orientation.

It is everyone's right to be able to gain access to a public building. According to the Human Rights Code, it is now mandatory (since April 18, 1988) for any program serving the public to provide access to people with disabilities. For the first time, people with disabilities will be able to complain to the Ontario Human Rights Commission if they feel they have been the subject of discrimination.

The Barrier Free Design Centre (BFDC) will provide

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information and support on available funding sources and appropriate designs. The BFDC is funded by the Office for Disabled Persons which also offers information and, unlike the BFDC, offers financial support.

4.3.1.3. Communication Technological Support

Another factor restricting accessibility to ABL programs, is the unavailability of communication assisting devices (CADs). For some individuals who are unable to vocalize thoughts and feelings or for individuals with sensory impairments which restrict the use of conventional communication methods, the employment of CADs may be the only effective means for literacy tutoring and communication itself. In some cases it is necessary for a program to supply a CAD at their location. For instance, if the consumer who requests literacy tutoring in a class or small group setting and is in need of a CAD which cannot be easily transported (eg. a computer), the ABL program should be able to access this literacy aid for the learner.

A typical CAD is any keyboard mechanism; that is, a typewriter or a computer. The computer allows for a host of hardware and software accessories which can assist the learner. For the learner with limited mobility, these accessories can open the otherwise locked door to literacy tutoring. Even the more limited typewriter can provide the learner, who is unable to manipulate a pencil, with a viable route towards realizing literacy goals. ABL coordinators and tutors unaware of these devices and without these readily available CADs are effectively locking out many potential learners.

ABL coordiantors must be willing to access and experiment, jointly with learners, with a variety of CADs. This will not only ensure the provision of a CAD most suited to the learner, it will also provide the tutor with an excellent opportunity for discovering available technologies. Awareness of available technologies will, in itself, assist in the advancement for integration.

Financial and information support for ABL coordinators wishing to access CADs is scarce. The only governmental funding source available to programs (i.e., of which I am aware) is through the MSD. Other funding sources wil be identified in the

funding source sheet developed by MSD (see section 4.2.4.). For support in information on available communication technologies and their potential for literacy tutoring, Designing Aids for Disabled Adults (DADA) is presently the only program wholly dedicated to this need. DADA is active in supporting institutions with training programs and their volunteers assist the users with their CADs. They are also active in providing small group discussions targeted to ABL staff and tutors interested in augmenting their programs with CADs in an effort to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Also available (at Frontier College) is an excellent report (Sutherland, 1987) on the various programs in Toronto which provide augmentative communication support for people with disabilities. Sutherland's report, entitled, How Can Computers Help?, emphasizes the importance of making the potential of new communication technologies known to people with disabilities and to those who provide services for them particularly those who provide opportunities for learning.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) will support ABL programs which tutor learners with visual impairments, with CADs, training/awareness programs and, if needed, staff.

4.3.1.4. Personal Support

With the exception of two ABL programs, none responded favorably to providing personal support to learners who need assistance with physical activities. These responses were largely based on ignorance of the needs for support of this kind and were associated with involved and complicated medical assistance. In reality in the context of the time needed for a literacy tutoring session, this assistance translates to help with page turning, eating and washroom activities. Without this support it is not possible for many potential learners to participate in literacy tutoring at community ABL programs.

Although supervisors and coordinators of ABL programs have all indicated that a "willingness" to tutor and assist is a necessary prerequisite for potential staff, it is evident that there are definite limitations to expectation in this regard. For

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instance, ABL coordinators and tutors place the responsibility of assistance with physical activities on the potential learner. Some coordinators of ABL programs feel that personal support of this kind (i.e. assistance with eating and/or washroom activities) is beyond the scope of a literacy practitioner's duty. This poses a real problem for the potential learner with a disability (see section 3.2.3.). Without a "willingness" to provide personal physical support, literacy coordinators and tutors cannot offer the opportunity for literacy upgrading to a significant number of people in the community.

4.3.1.5. Information Outreach

None of the ABL programs contacted in this research provide any information outreach to adults with disabilities. For fear of being 'swamped' with potential learners, ABL programs have never contacted individuals living in institutions nor have they made efforts to make their programs known to adults with disabilities living in the community. This is a major reason why programs rarely receive any inquiries from this population.

Lack of funding and a shortage of staff are the stock answers for the absence of this service. Coordinators are correct in assuming that if they were to conduct a literacy information outreach project targeted to adults with disabilities, an overwhelming number of potential learners would surface. However, by targeting one institution or one area in the community, the number of potential learners would be more controllable. By allocating two or three volunteer tutors (according to the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, there are a number of volunteers on a waiting list) to this project, both staffing and financial problems would be eliminated.

4.3.2. Accessible Community ABL Programs

Accessible community ABL programs are located in architecturally accessible buildings, are aware of and have access to CADs and provide attendant care when necessary. It is not necessary to repeat the factors and implications associated with these accessibility issues. However, this section will describe the training/awareness programs and philosophy of accessible programs.

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4.3.2.1. The Philosophies Behind Accessibility

The philosophy of ABL programs is based on a few key principles. The most prominent feature of this philosophy is discouragement of labels and recognition of individuality. The perception of people in terms of categories or labels minimizes expectations of potential which is sometimes internalized by the individuals subject to stereotyping. This simplistic approach is often the root of prejudice which is manifested in restrictions of access, interaction, cooperation and participation. Alternatively, the philosophy stresses a more personal approach.

A potential learner should be understood and evaluated in terms of personality, needs and goals. Each individual has personal goals, philosophies, dreams and perceptions which must first be acknowledged as opposed to stereotyping in relation to a disability. An individual may have a disability but a disability cannot have an individual.

This philosophy requires the potential learner and not the counsellor or advocate to make commitments to literacy upgrading. Although a counselor or advocate can make a person aware of existing accessible community ABL programs, only the potential learner is capable of making a real commitment. Only the potential learner is capable of expressing individualized needs and goals.

Appreciation for individuality has led many ABL programs to what Frontier College has termed Student Centred Individualized Learning (SCIL). The learner is identified in terms of who the person is and their particular needs, strengths and goals. The curriculum corresponds to these factors and is, therefore, individualized and learner centred. In the strict sense of this approach, every citizen, without any restriction, has the opportunity to participate in ABL tutoring within an integrated setting (see References, Carpenter, 1986 for more information).

For this approach to work, not only is an awareness of the special needs of citizens necessary, there must be a redefinition of the term, "special needs." Traditionally, this term has been used to create segregation. In a paper addressing the need for integrated education (Forest and Kappel, 1987), special needs has been defined as follows:

> Special needs means special challenges. The

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> challenge is to respect the uniqueness of each individual and his/her membership - membership in our communities, our families, our nations, our schools. The special need is to belong, to fully belong, with all that implies. Complete communities, families, nations and schools mean places and groups of people who meet each others' needs and which include rather than exclude. Special needs mean challenges, not special schools, education, special places, special groups, not exile (p. 1).

At Frontier College, much of this philosophy has been developed through the Independent Studies Literacy Program. Independent Studies was initiated in 1982 (at which time it was known as, "Literacy for People with Disabilities") to facilitate literacy tutoring for adults with physical disabilities. The program was created in response to the literacy needs of institutionalized individuals. Within one year, a number of requests were received by Frontier College to serve people labelled with mental handicaps. The program soon developed into a program which helped institutionalized individuals with literacy needs who had a variety of disabilities.

As the result of many inquiries received by Frontier College from individuals needing literacy upgrading who were not disabled, a shift in the program's thrust and in its name was effected. At that point, the name was changed to Independent Studies. No longer was the program segregated in nature or in populations served. All individuals who needed help were encouraged to participate.

4.3.2.2. Training/Awareness

The experiences gained in the Independent Studies program not only helped to develop the philosophy of individuality and integration, they also provided the building blocks for an effective training/awareness program for tutors and coordinating staff. Experiences gained by working with individuals with disabilities is continually shared with fellow staff members; some of whom have disabilities themselves. Frontier College is also active in ongoing research into other awareness programs which help to augment the practical experiences gained by tutors and staff; most notable is Wolfsenberger's PASSING.

Wolfsenberger (1975) has developed the Program Analysis of Service Systems Implementation Normalization Goals (PASSING). Briefly, the normalization principle is defined as:

> ...making available to all mentally retarded (sic) people patterns of life and conditions of everyday living which are as close as possible to regular circumstances and ways of life of society (Nirje, 1976, p.231).

Although there are some misgivings about Wolfsenberger's interpretation of the normalization principle (Perrin and Nirje, 1985), Frontier College has embraced the PASSING program and regards it as being one of the most effective tools for eliminating prejudicial attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Frontier College most actively uses the "Wounds Module" from the PASSING course. This is an extremely intensive program which addresses the many deep rooted prejudices held by the able-bodied population (and to a lesser degree, held also by the disabled population). The term, "wounds" refers to the wounds inflicted on the disabled population by the prejudiced attitudes held by the community. The course provides insight into the lives, highlighting hardships of individuals with disabilities. It is not possible to do justice to this program with a few descriptive words; the program must be experienced in order to fully comprehend its impact and its importance.

Frontier College is also actively involved in providing their training/awareness programs and philosophy and SCIL approach to other organizations. For instance, they have worked with the local Association for the Mentally Handicapped to encourage and help develop strategies for literacy delivery to their clientele.

There are, however, limitations to Frontier College. Because it is well known to the community for literacy tutoring and for its accessibility status, many potential learners with disabilities are referred to Frontier. At this time, approximately 1/3 of its learners in independent studies have a disability. This is an extremely high percentage of learners with disabilities. Because Frontier recognizes that a high ratio (relative to the community population) of learners with disabilities to able-bodied learners

creates an environment likened to a 'specialized' program, many potential learners with disabilities are restricted from immediate enrollment. In light of this scenario, it is shocking to hear other ABL coordinators state that there is little need to make programs accessible to the entire adult population.

Frontier rarely attends meetings which are set up by literacy umbrella groups, like MTML, for the purpose of identifying and discussing the literacy needs of the community. This is unfortunate considering the advancements it has made in the delivery of literacy tutoring to adults with disabilities. By offering valuable information and experience of working with traditionally unrepresented citizens, Frontier would assist the adult illiterate disabled population by dispelling the myths attributed to these individuals and help coordinators and tutors of other ABL programs feel more comfortable with the integrated philosophy.

4.4. Metro Toronto Movement For Literacy (MTML)

The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy (MTML), formed in 1978, is a non-profit, voluntary organization which promotes adult literacy. Its mandate includes: support in the creation of literacy programs in Metro Toronto; public awareness; community education and; program development.

MTML is, among other things, an information brokerage. MTML provides ABL programs with information on tutoring techniques, funding sources and the existence of other programs and projects which support the delivery of ABL. The information which is offered at this organization is often in response to the inquiries and requests made by the community, literacy practitioners, the government and community agencies.

Kathleen Forneri, coordinator for MTML, has recently made efforts to examine some of the issues surrounding the delivery of ABL to the disabled population. Kathleen has begun contacting organizations and programs which target the needs of people with disabilities. Organizations such as the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT), the Office for Disabled Persons, Persons United for Self Help (PUSH) and Blind Organization of Ontario with Self-Help Tactics (BOOST), provide information to the public on the many issues of living with a disability. Some

of this information will soon be available at MTML. By providing this information and by networking with programs which assist people with disabilities, MTML will help to reinforce the idea of integration and participation of all potential learners.

As an information centre for the community and for the ABL programs, MTML should also be responsible for creating a directory of the accessible ABL programs in Metro Toronto. By creating this directory, MTML will be filling a significant gap in the present information referral system. Furthermore, by addressing and publicizing the degree of accessbility of each community-based ABL program, the status and standards of accessibility of these programs should increase.

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Chapter 5. Recommendations

1. Strategies which address support for the needs associated with literacy tutoring for a range of people with disabilities must be developed.

Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must begin to recognize adults with disabilities as an integral part of the community. As with any citizen, a person with a disability has needs which must be addressed and supported in order to facilitate community integration and participation. For this to be effective, strategies for direction and organization of this support must be developed.

Strategies to be developed must include: methods for increasing awareness and understanding of the abilities of and imposed limitations on individuals with disabilities, methods for networking with information brokerages which assist the disabled population, methods for gaining financial assistance which would support unconditional accessibility and methods for an effective outreach program targeted to illiterate adults with disabilities.

2. Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must include Disability Awareness as a component in orientation and training/awareness sessions.

Throughout this report I have stressed the importance of gaining awareness of the many issues which surround people with disabilities. It is common knowledge that without an intimate awareness of a group of people, imagination and stereotyping will take its place. To combat the acceptance and assimilation of these elements which breed prejudice, there must be an openness and willingness to acquaint ourselves with these people.

As noted in section 4.3.1.1., there are Disability Awareness Programs (DAPs) which are available to the community. These programs offer the first step towards dispelling the many myths attributed to people with disabilities. However, caution must be exercised since DAPs are a means to an awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities and not an end to this goal. It is not possible for one DAP to attend to the plethora of issues which surround people with disabilities. It is not possible

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for one or even many DAPs to change peoples' attitudes. It is not possible for a program - a package - to capture the essence of a person.

Individuals responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must begin to share experiences with each other of working with individuals who have disabilities. They must also begin to include people with disabilities in their training/awareness sessions allowing for the opportunity for candid questions and answers.

Most importantly, it must be implicitly understood that it is not the disabled, retarded or the handicapped which need recognition, it is people, it is individuals.

3. Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must start to network with information brokerages which provide assistance to the disabled population.

Most of the ground work for collecting information on government and community-based programs which assist people with disabilities and organizations which aim to increase their accessibility status has already been conducted by information brokerages like the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT). Information on existing DAPs, programs which support the purchase of communication assisting devices (CADs), financial sources for the purchase of ramps and elevators and a host of other programs which help to facilitate integrated community living, are available through CILT.

ABL programs and other programs associated with literacy outreach must begin to liaise with CILT and other similar information brokerages. Networking of this kind will provide support for the literacy practitioners, learners with disabilities and the goal towards community integration and participation for all individuals.

4. Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must have information on and access to Communication Assisting Devices (CADs).

Knowledge of and access to CADs are necessary in order to meet the literacy needs of people with mobility disabilities and sensory impairments. As

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noted in section 4.3.1.3., there are programs and literature available which will increase awareness and support in the purchase of augmentative communication devices.

Representatives of the community-based ABL programs contacted in this research have all stressed that their aim is to increase communication skills. They recognize that the ability to communicate is an essential human right. Representatives must now realize that there are many people whose only avenue of communication is through the utilization of CADs.

Representatives have also stressed that the ability to communicate effectively, empowers the individual. They must also realize that many adults with disabilities are largely controlled by others and that it is not possible for many of these people to communicate their needs. It is not possible because these individuals are unable to utilize conventional literacy tools and subsequently, were never provided the opportunity to develop their literacy skills. The programs must now fill this unjust gap and offer these individuals the means and the tools necessary for this population to upgrade their literacy skills.

5. Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must begin to factor in accessibility costs as a standard item.

All of the ABL coordinators have complained that there are insufficient funds available for the facilitation of unconditional accessibility. These same coordinators admit that they have not included the costs of making their programs accessible in their proposals for financial assistance. It is not possible for the ministerial agents responsible for the allocation of financial assistance to ABL programs to respond to undeclared needs. Ministries have the responsibility of meeting the needs for the public. However, these needs must be articulated.

Coordinators should include costs which pertain to: training/awareness of disability issues to tutors and staff, architectural adjustments (e.g. elevators, ramps, accessible washrooms, braille signs, etc.), the purchase of augmentative communication devices, and increased salary for staff whose job description includes attendant care.

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6. Programs responsible for the delivery of ABL tutoring must begin to conduct literacy outreach to adults living in institutions.

Representatives from ABL programs must begin to make contact with adults who are living in institutions. Many of these adults have never been given the opportunity to express their literacy needs and goals to a representative of a program which honors the learner centred approach. Furthermore, many institutionalized adults are unaware of the existence of community-based ABL programs. Adults with disabilities who are living in an institution must be targeted with literacy information and allowed the chance to act accordingly.

As noted in section 3.3.1., although adults living in institutions are eager to increase their literacy skills, their conditioned and sheltered lifestyles have inhibited their assertiveness and that has resulted in their creating an image of an intimidating outside world. Because of this, representatives of ABL programs must undertake the sensitive role of meeting with and informing these individuals of the opportunities for literacy upgrading in the community. Coordinators, supervisors, teachers or tutors who adopt this role will not only be welcoming the learner into an ABL program, they will be welcoming an individual into the community.

7. A directory of literacy programs must include status of accessibility.

Presently, there are no directories which indicate the degree to which literacy programs are accessible to people with disabilities. Organizations like MSD and MTML which communicate information on ABL programs to the community, must begin to address and record the status of accessibility for each literacy program. This can be simply done by including the appropriate questions (see Appendix: Questionnaire for Literacy Programs) on the annually conducted inventory of community ABL programs.

By neglecting to include the degree of accessibility of each program (i.e. degree to which it is architecturally accessible, availability of CADs, provisions for attendant care and absence of prejudice) in a directory, illiterate adults who have disabilities are being handicapped further.

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Chapter 6. Conclusion

It is clear that awareness, effective networking and cooperation are necessary for integration and participation of learners with disabilities. These basic ingredients must be integral to all of the community ABL programs.

There are an overwhelming number of issues associated with the provision and maintenance of fully integrated ABL programs which can not possibly be addressed by any one program. Organizations and programs responsible for the delivery of ABL to the community must begin to network with and ask cooperation from groups which provide assistance to the disabled population. ABL programs which provide fully integrated settings must also be responsible for disseminating this information and assist with raising disability awareness. Unfortunately, this is not happening.

It has also been disconcerting to learn that some ABL programs are quick to pass responsibility on to others. For example, some ABL coordinators have not yet recognized the need for fully accessible settings because, according to them, they have not received any inquiries from adults with disabilities. As indicated, many adults with disabilities feel frustrated, intimidated and overwhelmed by community life let alone by literacy programs which are a source of angst for any adult with literacy needs. Moreover, many adults with disabilities are not even aware of the existence of literacy programs since there is no literacy outreach which effectively targets this population.

Another factor complicating the path towards unconditional accessibility is the limitation of financial assistance. As mentioned in section 4.2.5., MSD has recognized the need to make ABL programs accessible to all citizens in need of literacy upgrading, however, they are presently financially limited and unable to provide the community ABL programs with the funds needed for unconditional accessiblity.

There are, however, some newly developed programs and projects which have potential for assisting ABL programs towards the goal of unconditional accessibility. The Task groups of the Interministerial Committee on ABL, the awareness programs presently

being developed by MSD and the recent commitment for awareness and action from MTML show some hope for future integration and participation of all learners.

In light of the apprehension and fear (which is perhaps, at times, unconscious) of working with adults with disabilities, ABL programs must also begin to support each other. Coordinators and tutors must share experiences of working with adults who have disabilities and exchange information on programs which can assist with the delivery of ABL tutoring to this population. Hopefully, through this support a significant number of people, who have been traditionally segregated, can gain the necessary skills for participation in our community.

The time is long overdue for us to recognize the importance of providing accessible, integrated literacy programs to the community. The time is long overdue for us to recognize how we have created restricted access. The time is long overdue for us to recognize that people with disabilities are people first. Now is the time to act.

> We pass through this world but once. Few tragedies can be more extensive than the stunting of life, few injustices deeper than the denial of an opportunity to strive or even to hope, by a limit imposed from without, but falsely identified as lying within...(Gold, 1971, p.28).

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Appendix

Literacy Program Questionnaire

1) What are your office hours?

2) What are your tutoring hours?

3) What areas are you presently serving?

4) Can you provide in-home or in-institution tutoring?

5) What program style do you utilize? (eg., one to one, group, phonetic, eclectic, etc.).

6) Is your program Student Centred?

7) How many hours of instruction/week do your students receive?

8) What determines a successful completion of a course?

9) Is your program academically credited?

10) Are there any follow-up programs?

11) Do you offer any extra-curricular activities such as social gatherings?

12) How are you being funded?

13) What qualifications must a person have in order to be a tutor on your program?

14) What type of training do you provide for your tutors?

15) Do these training programs include any material concerning the needs of learners with disabilities?

16) How many tutors feel comfortable tutoring learners with disabilities?

17) Would training/awareness of core staff and/or tutors assist you to include people with disabled conditions in your program?

18) What is the average time commitment of each tutor?

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19) How many learners could be identified as having a disabled condition (eg. uses a wheelchair for mobility, has a visual or hearing impairment. labelled with a mental handicap)?

20) How many calls/month do you receive from learners with disabilities?

21) How many potential learners with disabilities are there on the waiting list?

22) What are your primary sources of referrals?

23) Are you architecturally accessible?

24) Do you provide transportation services?

25) Are you equiped with any communication assistive devices?

26) Are your information packages accessible to people with visual impairments?

27) Can you provide or have access to attendant care services (eg. aiding learners to eat or washroom assistance?

28) What qualifications must a potential learner have in order to enroll in your program?

29) How do you assess a potential learner?

30) How are their needs identified?

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Learner Questionnaire

(1) Do you have a need to increase your reading and writing skills?

(2) Would you like to be involved in a literacy program?

(3) Has anyone approached you with information about a literacy program?

(4) Have you ever approached a literacy program?
-Which ones?
-Are you now or have you ever been on a waiting list?

(5) Have you ever attended a literacy program?

(6) What experiences have you had in literacy programs?

(7) What changes must literacy programs make in order to meet your needs?

(8) Would you be more interested in attending a literacy program if your needs were met?

(9) How would you rate your ability to read and write?
-Can you read a newspaper? etc.
-Can you write your name and address? etc.

(10) What is your educational history?
-What grade did you last complete?
-Were you integrated in the public school system?
-How much attention was placed on your reading and writing skills?

(11) Has anyone told you that you have a limited capacity for reading and writing or have you felt that you have been treated as such?

(12) Do you believe you can increase your reading and writing ability?

(13) How would your life change if your reading and writing skills were improved?